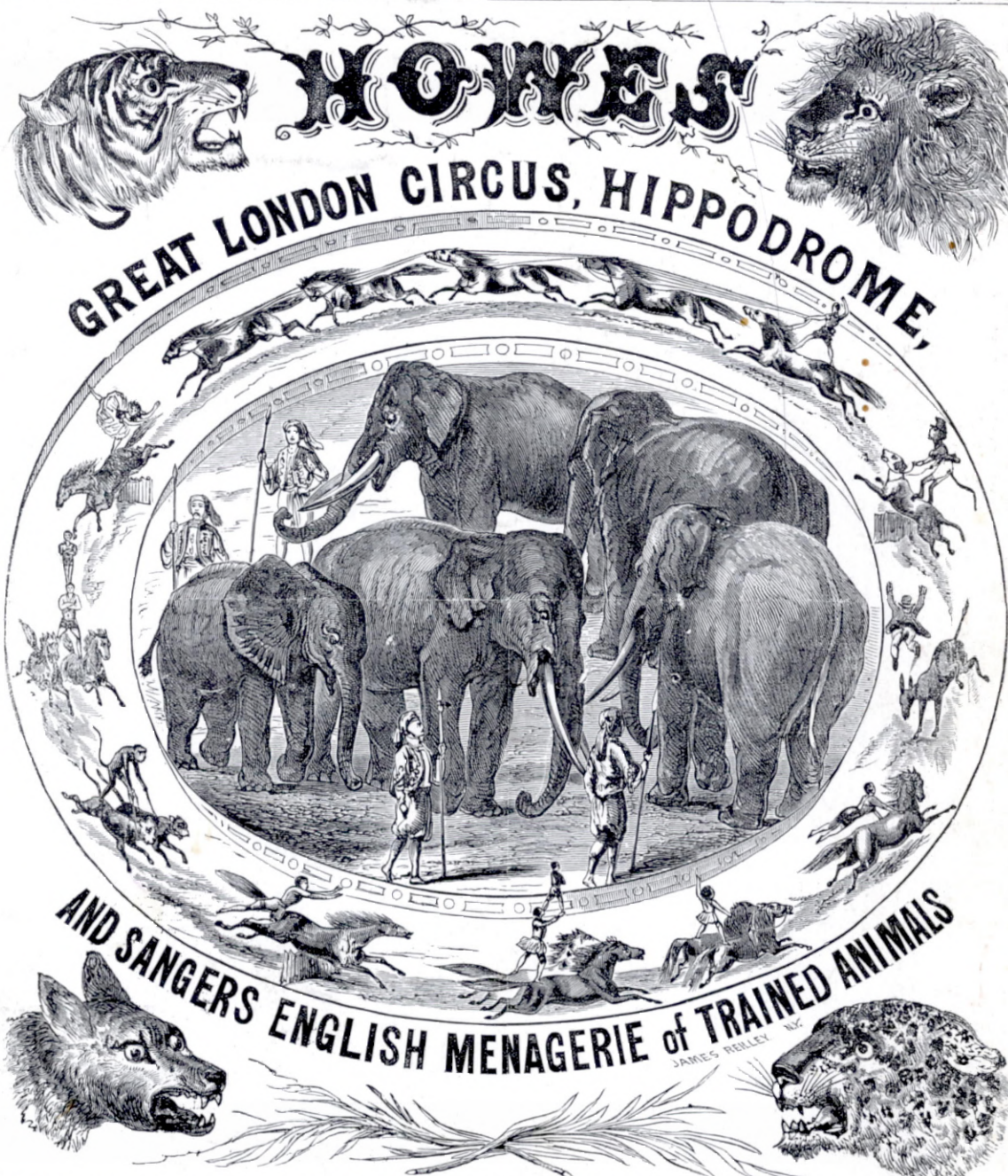


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THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY





## THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Vol. 20, No. 2

March-April 1976

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

Joseph T. Bradbury, Associate Editor

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**CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.,** Stuart Thayer, President, 276 Sumac Lane, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48105; Tom Parkinson, Vice President, P.O. Box 233, Savoy, Ill. 61874; Edward L. Jones, Secretary-Treasurer, 800 Richey Rd., Zanesville, Ohio 43701.

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### THIS MONTH'S COVER

The illustration on our cover this issue is from the front cover of an eight page courier used by the Howes Great London Circus during the season of 1871, under the ownership of Seth B. Howes.

The courier was printed by the James Reilly printing firm of New York City. It is typical of the line cut illustrations used during this period. It is from the Pfening Collection.

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### IMPORTANT NOTICE

In the last issue of the BANDWAGON you were advised that the Circus Historical Society needed more members.

Our organization has not gained in net membership over the last few years. During this time printing and postage costs have increased greatly. The dues were raised by \$1 last year, and this helped some, but we now find ourselves in the very bad position of having to cut back on the size and quality of the BANDWAGON, unless additional funds are available.

Each member who really enjoys the BANDWAGON and wants to continue receiving the quality publication that has been produced in the past must stand up and be counted. We need the help of each member in securing additional members or subscribers.

If you really care about the Circus Historical Society now is the time that you must come to the aid of your organization.

The dues notices, still at \$9 will be mailed soon. Please return your payment to Ed Jones as soon as possible AFTER receiving your notice. Do not send payment until you receive your notice, as it causes additional bookkeeping.

Applications are available from the Secretary-Treasurer or the BANDWAGON Editor. Lets see some real interest and cooperation in keeping our organization alive.

Fred D. Pfening, Chairman  
Past President's Membership Committee

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# DOWNIE BROS. CIRCUS

BY JOSEPH T. BRADBURY

## PART III, THE 1932 AND 1933 SEASONS

### THE 1932 SEASON

In early January P.N. Branson, who had been with Fred Buchanan's Robbins Bros. Circus for the past three seasons, was signed as general agent. A week or so later it was announced that the George Hanneford Family riding act had been signed to appear in the Downie Bros. 1932 performance. This act had earlier been inked by Wirth and Hamid for booking into fairs and parks during the coming season but they released it so it could go with Downie.

The Jan. 30, 1932 Billboard said that Charles Katz, assistant manager, had purchased the new grandstand which had been used by Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West Show in 1931. It had been placed in storage in Newark, Ohio. The complete story on this deal is not known to the author but in any event Katz did get it and had it shipped to Macon quarters. Since the tiers were 18 high they had to be reduced and the grandstand redesigned somewhat to fit the Downie big top. The show planned to use a full grandstand with folding chairs on both the long and short sides. An order was given to Walter Driver for a new big top, a 110 ft. round with three 40 ft. middles, which was the largest tent used so far by Downie.

The nation, despite the gloom of the depression, was set to celebrate the George Washington Bicentennial in 1932 and all levels of government, institutions, and other organizations were encouraged to recall in some dramatic way the 200th Birthday of the first president. The amusement industry was also asked to cooperate and shortly after the first of the year several circuses including Hunt's, Barnett Bros., Lewis Bros., Walter L. Main, and Downie Bros. announced they would carry out the George Washington theme in their parades or specs. None did this task as well as Downie Bros. which not only designed and presented a special Washington Bicentennial closing spec but also had built a new No. 1 band semi which featured on both sides a full, life size painting, of Washington Crossing the Delaware. It was simply a beautiful creation handled by Ernest Gosch, principal artist at the show's quarters. A second semi, the same size, was built and this one was decorated with full side paintings of Ben Hur's Chariot Race. These semis were open topped and used to transport horses and camels. Planks were placed across the

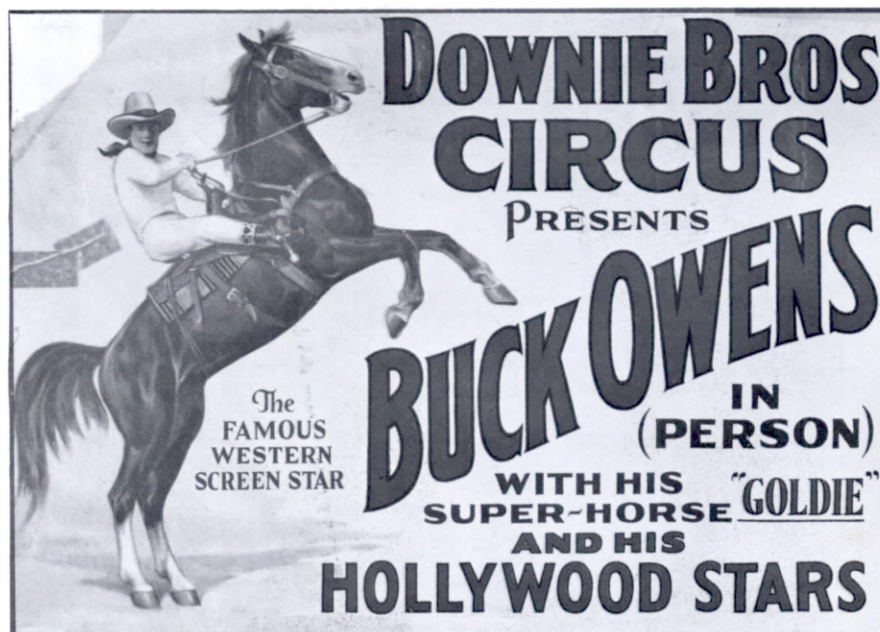


Photo No. 1 — Buck Owens litho, season of 1932. He was the first of several Hollywood film cowboys that appeared with Downie Bros. in the 1930's. Pfening Collection.

top for the band to sit on during the parade. Both of these beautiful vehicles would grace the Downie Bros. street parade in 1932 and for it's remaining parading years.

A major project was the construction, under the direction of Joe Gilligan, of a large sleeper semi designed to accommodate 18. It was termed the largest "hotel" on wheels, a real "Pullman" built on a semi trailer. Other semis were no doubt built as had been planned but details as to type and total number are lacking. It may be recalled that the show announced two cage trucks would be built but unless they were to replace others possibly damaged in wrecks or otherwise it is doubtful they were ever constructed as the show had an entire new set of cages built the previous winter. Many reports say the show had a total of 8 cages in 1932, 7 in the menagerie, and 1 in the sideshow. This was same number carried in 1931.

The March 12, 1932 Billboard said that Pedro Morales and Concha and Billy Pape had recently finished 7 weeks of indoor circus dates with leaps being done by Pape and foot slides, back and forward, by Pedro and Con-

cha. Pape was well as the Morales family would be back with Downie this season.

The April 9, 1932 Billboard announced that the show's opening would be April 18 in Macon under auspices of the American Legion and the Utility Milk Fund of the Womens Club. The article said that many new and large semis had been built as had a number of parade pieces. The show had been beautifully painted by Leroy (Corkey) Williams and his staff, including artist, Ernest Gosch. The carpenter show, under direction of Charles Katz and boss carpenter, Fred De Ivey, had been busy. The new grandstand with chairs was all completed and new canvas was expected soon. New wardrobe had been designed and made under supervision of Mrs. Sparks. Buck Owens, Hollywood movie cowboy, had been signed and would be featured in the aftershow concert with a company of 12. Acts appearing in the performance would include the George Hanneford Family, Morales Family, the Enos, Karl Larkin duo, and Billy Pape and the leaps. The street parade had been strengthened by addition of 18 head of ring stock and several new and impressive floats. Special praise was given to the new Washington and Ben Hur semis. Baggage trucks had been painted red with gold scrolls and elaborately striped and lettered, and Ted Premont





Photo No. 3 — Downie Bros. on lot, season of 1932. Pfening Collection.

had worked out novel details in lighting. Clowns to be with the show included the Two Wilsons (Gil and Dime), Jeff Murphree, Shorty Hinkle, Wyatt Davis, Roy Leonhart, John Bossler, Harry Taviton of Funny Ford fame, and Harry Barrow, leaper and acrobat. The advance was headed by Paul N. Branson, general agent; Fred C. Kilgore, contracting agent, and Clyde Willard, manager advance cars. The show was scheduled to have an enlarged advance crew with special paper. Irish Horan was signed as press agent ahead.

A new litho was designed for Buck Owens, who would become the first of several western film stars to be with the show over the next few seasons.

Since the show was headed shortly for the Cincinnati area where the principal Billboard offices were located no reporter was sent to cover the Macon opening, April 18 as it was planned to review the show when it moved into that area.

First road date was at Griffin, Ga. the next day, then the show moved into Atlanta for two days, April 20-21 under

Photo No. 2 — Tableau No. 61, wardrobe truck, and canopy, season of 1932. Personnel are not identified. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.

auspices of the Shrine. It was the first motorized circus to play Atlanta. The show paraded both days going a different route each day. After one more Georgie stand, Rome, April 22, Downie went into Tennessee to play Chattanooga and Nashville. Six stands in Kentucky followed, including two days in Louisville, April 28-29. The show was booked for Covington, May 3, and paper went up but the city held out for a high parade license so the date was cancelled and Newport substituted.

While near Cincy the Billboard staff descended on the show and a full review appeared in the May 14 issue, with headlines, "DOWNIE BROS. ON 72 PIECES OF MOTORIZED ROLLING STOCK." The article began by saying the show was approximately the size of a 20 car railroad organization and all equipment rated high, had an excellent program presented by Charles Sparks which featured the old time leaps. Business at Newport was termed fair and at Reading, Ohio, the following stand, it was a light matinee but good night house. Other notes said the organization was the "Barnum of the motorized shows", canvas all new,

had a good band of 13 pieces, costuming of highest order, performance excellent, has 72 pieces of rolling stock, most of it Chevrolet with some GMC's. The Billboard circus editor said he hadn't seen any better nor has he observed anything finer in the way of painting, lettering, or pictorial work on the trucks. Two paintings especially stand out — George Washington Crossing The Delaware and Ben Hur. The report continued:

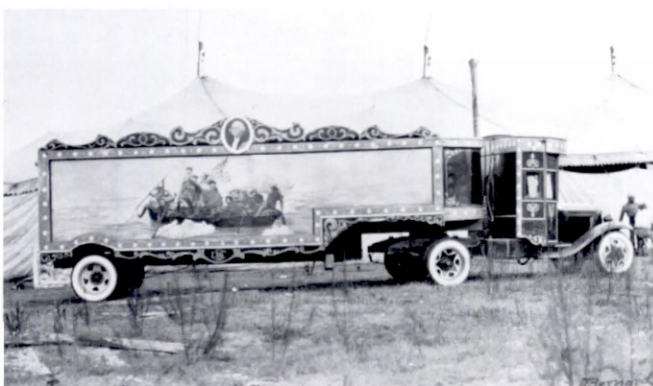
Grandstand chairs are on both sides. There are 17 head of horses and ponies. Sparks can feel proud of this show which is approximately the size of a 20 car railroad show.

Admission prices are 25 and 50 cents with 50¢ extra for reserved chairs. Performance time is one hour and 45 minutes. Gene Enos is first rate announcer.

Canvas includes big top, 110 ft. round with three 40's; seating 3000; sideshow, 60 with two 30's; and menagerie 60 with three 30's. There are 250 employees with show.

The 1932 staff includes Charles

Photo No. 5 — Semi No. 200 with beautiful painting of "Washington Crossing the Delaware" on Downie Bros. lot at Savannah, Ga., Oct. 26, 1932. Pfening Collection.





Sparks, manager: Charles Katz, asst. manager: Clint Shuford, secy-treas: William Morgan, auditor and press agent back: P.N. Branson, general agent: F.C. Kilgore, local contractor: Irish Horan, advance press agent: Milt Robbins, sideshow manager: Fred De Ivey, boss carpenter shop and manager of pit show: Gene Enos, equestrian director, announcer: Harry Leffler, supt. privileges: Rodney Harris, musical director: Jimmie Baker, reserve seat tickets: Steve Roberts, supt. canvas: George Palmer, supt. menagerie: James Baker, commissary dept: Frank Detre, asst. commissary dept.: Jack Fitzgerald, chef: Teddy Premond, lights: Art Berry, props: Irwing Arnold, ring stock: F.M. Koen, 24 hour agent: Larry Davis, supt. elephants: James Noble, blacksmith: Clyde Willard, manager Advertising Car No. 1: Robert Wyatt, manager No. 3 car: Pat Hill, checker-up: Frank McGuyre, legal adjuster: William McNeil, mechanical supt: Doc Landers, asst. mechanical: George Engles, in charge of tires: Jimmy Gallagher and Jimmy Dugan, bannermen.

A truck with sides and end lowered, occupied by band during the performance, is used for transporting the big top canvas.

The 1932 program was as follows:

"Pageant of the Orient, spec with entire company participating. Principals are Morales Sisters, graceful dancers, and Ella Harris, accomplished soloist who also sings with the band in concert before the show: Buck Owens, cowboy of the films, a feature from Hollywood, is introduced: Morales Trio, two clowning on the trampoline; Riding dogs and monkey, worked by Irwin Arnold and Merrit Belew; Old time leaps, 8 in line-up, for finish Billy Pape does a single somersault over 5 elephants; Single elephant acts worked by Misses Shuford, Mitzie, and Harris; Leonhardt, Bossler, and White, comedy acrobats; Walters Duo on Roman rings

Photo No. 6 — Downie Bros. air calliope on lot at Savannah, Ga. Oct. 26, 1932. Pfening Collection.

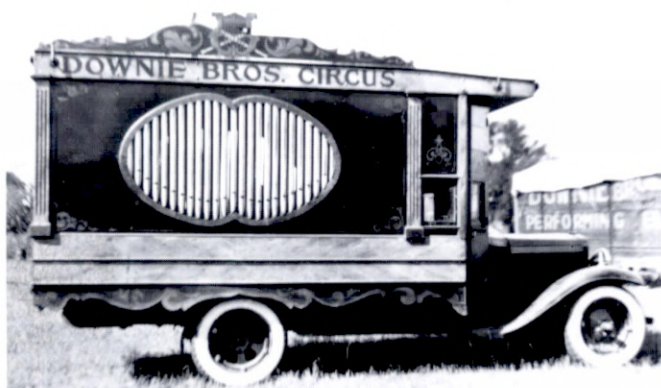


Photo No. 4 — Charles Sparks, owner of Downie Bros., at front door of big top, Savannah, Ga., Oct. 26, 1932. Pfening Collection.

and Larkin Duo, club jugglers; Morales Trio, front and back foot slides on the wire: Principal riding, William Walleth Jr., Isabelle McCree, and George Hanneford: Swinging ladders, Misses Lillian, Janie, and Marion, concluding with a neck whirl: Four pony drills by Gene Enos and Irwin Arnold and 8 horse liberty act by Merritt Belew: Funny Ford on track: Hand balancing, Frank Satorio, Globe balancing, Mary Enos, and furniture balancing, the Larkins: Concert announcement: Big elephant act (5) in center ring, Lary Davis, finishing with long mount on track: Iron jaw number, Misses Walter, Wilson, and Morales Sisters: Buck Owens and riders again on track, announcement: Roy Leonhardt, pantomime work with his baseball bit: Dog acts worked by Misses Davis and Rock, and pigs worked by Merritt Belew: Van and Jamie

Walters on double traps and Lillian Wilson and Ella Harris on single traps: George Hanneford Family Riding Act: Concert announcement: High school horses ridden by Misses Shuford, Harris, Davis, Roche, Wilson, Poplin, Owens, Harding, and Messers Belew and Arnold: High carrying perch, Carl and Mickie Larkin, and Gene and Mary Enos: Teresa Morales on single trapeze, heel catch: Bucking mule, 'Dynamite' worked by Merritt Belew: Closing spec, 'George Washington Bicentennial Theme', participants in colonial costume, and there is a fife and drum corps, minuet dance, and liberty bell. Clown numbers are interspersed throughout the performance. Lineup includes Gil Wilson, Dime Wilson, Shorty Hinkle, Jeff Murphree, Bill Pape, Wyatt Davis, John Harddig, Roy Leonhardt, John Bossler, and Stanley White.

"Wild West is headed by Buck Owens, in roping and riding number: Mrs. Owens, trick rider: Mr. and Mrs. Charles Poplin, trick riding and roping: Mrs. Harding, fancy roping: Irwin Arnold, trick riding: George Hanneford, Australian whip cracking: and Jimmy Ray, wrestler meeting all comers.

"Sideshow has Mrs. Robbins, mentalist: Maxine Roberts, musical act: Ralph Redden, Punch, magic, and ventriloquism (also inside lecturer): Gertrude Redden, snakes and impalement act: Gloria Hand, cockatoos: Al Freita's Hawaiian Trio: Abdallah Ben Deb, fire act: Minstrels and band (11 in company), Ed Washington, leader: and untamable lion, Birch Hand.

"Pit Show has monkey and baby, den of snakes, baboon, and several other animals in charge of Fred De Ivey.

"Menagerie contains, hyena, baboon, 4 lions, den of monkeys, sloth and polar bears, 2 tigers, 5 elephants (Teddy, Tena, Babe, Queen, Pinto), 4 camels, panther, and leopard."

The show played 7 stands in Ohio

Photo No. 7 — Downie Bros. elephants on lot at Savannah, Ga. Oct. 26, 1932. Left to right are Queen, Pinto, Teddy (tusker), Tena, and Babe. Photo by Charles Bernard.







Photo No. 9 — Sideshow band riding No. 69 tableau in parade at Savannah, Ga., Oct. 26, 1932. Photo by Charles Bernard.

and was the first motorized show of the season in Akron, May 9, as well as in Canton the next day where the advance landed some excellent downtown billing sites. Sparks announced that Downie intended to play larger cities than in the past and the early season route had already been the show in places usually played only by railers.

The May 14, 1932 Billboard said the show was moving east ahead of all opposition and would make only one stop in the Upper Ohio Valley, at Holiday's Cove, near Weirton, W.Va., across the river from Steubenville, Ohio on May 11. From there the show moved into Pennsylvania at Swickley. A week later the Billboard said that Downie patronage was up to expectation during its recent tour of Ohio despite the heavy opposition billing of Ringling interests at more than half the stands. There was a light matinee at Akron and the rain cut the evening crowd to a half house. John Ringling did not send out Sparks Circus in 1932 which cut his total number of circuses to four, Ringling-Barnum, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and Al G Barnes. The presence of Downie billers in the larger Ohio cities customarily played by one or more of the Ringling units made the show a prime target for the opposition brigade.

The first week in Pennsylvania saw good business as the show played around the Pittsburgh area, then moved north with final stands in the state coming at Butler, Meadville, Oil City, and Warren. The show entered New York at Salamanca, May 22, returned to Pennsylvania to play Bradford, then it was back into New York for 11 more stands. Downie was the first circus of the season in Binghamton, May 26, where George Barlow caught it and reported two fair size houses.

The Billboard in commenting on recent Downie activities said that Roxy Fiber joined at Bradford, Pa. with his flashy lunch wagon, three lion cubs were born, May 30, at Oswego, N.Y., the parade had not been late so far in the

season, and newspapers had been giving wonderful afternotices. Also it said that Billy Pape, out of the leaps for several days with a sprained ankle, was back in the program again.

The show went into Vermont at Bennington, June 6, and after stands at Rutland, Burlington, and Montpelier, moved on to New Hampshire at West Lebanon on June 10. Haverhill, June 15, was the first of 4 dates in Massachusetts and next the show went on a 14 stand tour of Maine which it had not played since 1930. Calais played July 1 was to see Sells-Floto a short time later as that show was picking up many dates usually played by the Sparks Railroad Circus in New England and Eastern Canada. Downie and Sells-Floto were in opposition at several stands in the general New England area.

It might be wondered by some why Charlie Sparks, who nearly always took his railroad show into Canada, did not route Downie Bros. into the Dominion. Many towns in Canada no doubt would have turned out heavily for any Sparks owned show. In those years the road network in Canada was not as good as in the United States but primary reason for motorized circuses not going there was the complexity and confusion of rules and regulations governing truck transportation. There were no standardized regulations and shows in the U.S. were afraid to risk the journey although all during the 1930's and early 40's the same shows were covering the nation from coast to coast. It wasn't until 1949 after the Canadian road network had been vastly improved and regulations standardized that Robbins Bros. made an initial journey into the Dominion. Later United States motorized shows often ventured into that land.

Rumford, July 5, was the final Maine date when Downie moved into New Hampshire for the second time and played dates at West Conway, Littleton, Newport, and Laconia. Two large crowds were at Newport, July 8, after the show had jumped 103 miles from Littleton. It was on the lot early and the parade left promptly at noon.

A return to Massachusetts came at Salem, July 11, a city which would also



Photo No. 10 — Clown band riding No. 55 tableau in parade at Savannah, Ga., Oct. 26, 1932. Photo by Charles Bernard.

see Sells-Floto on July 27. A single stand was played in Rhode Island at Newport, July 18, then it was back to the Bay State at Webster which in turn was followed by four dates in Connecticut.

In the meantime history has since recorded that the great depression hit rock bottom in July 1932. For most circuses business was downright poor. The once mighty John Ringling had to default on payment of the loan he had made in September 1929 to purchase the five shows of the American Circus Corporation and thus lost control of his once great circus empire. Of the four Ringling owned circuses, Al G. Barnes was having an extremely rough season. Sells-Floto wasn't doing much better, and only Hagenbeck-Wallace was showing a fair profit under the managerial genius of Jess Adkins. The Big Show itself evidently was loosing heavily. In the rest of the circus world Downie Bros. was moving along okay showing a little profit but there didn't seem to be any of the occasional real big days such as encountered the previous season. Many of the smaller shows were resorting to gimmicks such as discounted merchants tickets in an effort to keep going. It was a mean season.

Downie went into New Jersey at Morristown, July 25, and after three dates in the state headed into Pennsylvania to play Pottstown and Lebanon. The show played Hagerstown, Maryland and then made a venture into Virginia with initial date at Winchester. Harrisonburg, August 2, was a pretty good day with near capacity matinee and satisfactory night house. That date Sparks received a telegram of congratulations from Hon. Sol Bloom, associate director of the United States George Washington Bicentennial Commission, thanking him for his cooperation in helping the nation to observe the 200th anniversary of the birth of Washington.

Downie didn't stay long in Virginia which was to have its share of cir-



cuses. In addition to Downie, Sam B. Dill, Bostock, and Sells-Floto had all scheduled appearances in the state. The show quickly moved northward through Maryland and went into Pennsylvania at Bedford, August 10. Crossing the state in four stands the show played Jamestown, N.Y., August 15, returned to the Keystone for Corry, then moved on to Ohio.

Dates at Ashtabula, Elyria, Sandusky, and Defiance took Downie across Ohio and into Indiana for the first time ever with a stand at Warsaw, August 22. The show also entered Michigan for the first time the next day at Three Rivers with seven additional stands in the state scheduled.

CHS Gordon Potter visited at Benton Harbor, August 31, and made the first detailed listing of the street parade we have acquired. Potter's parade lineup plus other notes he made that day are as follows:

Downie Bros. Circus, Parade Line-up, August 31, 1932, Benton Harbor, Michigan.

5 girls riding horses

Semi trailer, sound system truck.

Semi Trailer, band truck.

Cage truck, lion.

Truck with men riding on it.

Cage truck, leopard.

Truck with bagpiper riding on it.

Semi trailer with clowns riding on it.\*\*

Cage truck, monkey and hyena.

Truck with clown band riding on it.

Cage truck, lions.

Semi trailer with 5 girls riding on it.\*\*

Cage truck, monkeys.

Cart pulled by 1 pony.

Truck

5 cowboys riding horses.

Cage truck, bears.

Chariot pulled by 4 ponies.

Chariot pulled by 4 ponies.

Photo No. 8 — Tableau No. 21, "The Crusader" painting on side, with big show band in parade at Savannah, Ga., Oct. 26, 1932. At times during the season the big show band rode this vehicle in the parade. Ordinarily the band was on the George Washington semi. Photo by Charles Bernard.



Truck with sideshow band riding on it.

Truck with dogs in it.

Cage truck, lions

2 girls riding and driving 2 horses each. (Probably tandem)

Semi trailer with Morales family riding on it.\*\*

Cage truck, tiger.

4 camels.

Semi trailer for elephants

5 elephants.

Semi trailer for elephants

Air calliope truck.

Clown Ford.

Small truck.

1 man riding horse.

\*\*—Some of these were flat bed trailers, as I recall, am sure the Morales family rode one of these and there were several others.

#### Summary, Trucks and Animals in Parade.

15 horses

9 ponies

5 elephants

4 camels

1 car

8 cages

23 trucks, including cages.

Additional Notes.

4 pole big top with 40 ft. middles.

10 sections of canvas

28 quarter poles.

72 vehicles on the show.

Leaving Michigan, the show played another stand in Indiana, at Valparaiso, Sept. 1, then moved on into an additional new state, Illinois, for a stand at Evanston. At Waukegan, Sept. 2, Downie Bros. and Hagenbeck-Wallace played day and date. Both shows were billed heavily and Ora Parks of H-W and Irish Horan of Downie landed good material in the daily press. Downie placed tickets on sale at a big downtown department store at reduced rates 3 days in advance and on show date occupied a lot just outside the city limits. Hagenbeck-Wallace was on a city lot. To add to the Labor Day festivities, the American Legion opened its carnival the same day, so there were three attractions all seeking the natives loose change.

The Billboard commenting on Downie activities of late said the show had a full house at the matinee in Evanston and had them sitting on the ground in an overflow at night. Two score visiting showmen voted Downie the finest motorized circus on the road. George Hanneford was badly kicked by a horse during his act in Evanston but went on to finish the routine.

Downie played five more stands in Illinois then moved over into Missouri for dates at Flat River, Cape Girardeau, Sikeston, and Caruthersville, At Cape Girardeau, Hagenbeck-Wallace was again in opposition, missing day and date by only 24 hours. Downie was there Sept. 12, H-W the 13th. Both shows reported a good attendance.

Downie continued to get into some large cities and was at Memphis, Tenn. September 15. The show paid only \$20.25 for a parade fee in the city where there was a fair matinee but straw house at night. The show was now picking up a few good dates and hopefully the south in general would be a little better than the previous season but agricultural prices were still severely depressed and economic conditions at a low ebb. After additional Tennessee stands at Dyersburg, Selmer, and Pulaski the show moved into Alabama at Guntersville on September 21.

Three more Alabama stands followed and then the show made a quick crossing of Georgia playing Columbus, Thomaston, and Gainesville. Downie was at Anderson, S.C., Sept. 29, and after 9 stands in the Palmetto state moved on to North Carolina with first date coming on Wilmington, Oct. 10.

The show played a total of 10 dates in that state and then returned to South Carolina to catch Hartsville and Aiken. Entering Georgia at Augusta, Oct. 24, the show would play out the remainder of the season in its home state.

The Oct. 29, 1932 Billboard reported there was an amusement "war" going

Photo No. 12 — Semi with Morales Family in Downie Bros. parade, season of 1932. Pfening Collection.





on in Augusta, Ga. between the operator of a chain of movie theaters and various other attractions playing the city. These included Bilroy's Tent Show, Downie Bros. Circus, which played October 24, and a wrestling show sponsored by Spanish American War veterans. The theater man claimed none of these competitive shows paid enough local license and he was attempting a move to have these licenses boosted to a prohibitive fee. Such was typical of the times when amusement dollars were scarce and some locals were especially resentful of all outsiders. Show owners often retorted the claim that travelling amusements took money out of the town by reminding the natives that all monies spent at the local movie houses didn't remain in town but a goodly portion went to Hollywood big wigs for rentals of their films.

Leaving August, Downie played Statesboro, then moved on to Savannah for two days, Oct. 26-27. The latter turned out to be the banner stand of the season and the four big houses were a blessed relief for the several weeks of mediocre business. Weather was ideal with the parade given on the first day. Sparks told Charles Bernard writing for the Billboard that the first afternoon's business, a turnaway, made it the banner stand for any single day of the season. It was a great two day engagement, the lot perfect with plenty of parking space, available utilities, and street car service.

The show was at Brunswick, October 29, followed by Waycross, with the final stand of the 1932 season coming at Albany on October 31.

The Billboard said that the Downie season of 28 weeks had carried the show 10,724 miles. Longest run was from Machais to Skowhegan, Maine, 154 miles, shortest was 12 miles from Newport, Ky. to Reading, Ohio. Business for the season was termed as

spotty. There was only one change in the performance during the season, Bessie Costello replaced Isabel McCree in the Hanneford riding act, as she had to return home on account of death of her brother. The show reported there was quite a bit of opposition from other circuses during the season.

Downie Bros. moved on to its quarters in Macon following the close and things remained very quiet for the next couple of months. A heated Presidential campaign came to an end in early November with the Democratic candidate, Franklin D. Roosevelt, winning a decisive victory over President Hoover. Showmen all over the country as well as rest of the nation then patiently waited through the remainder of the fall and winter until the March enaughural when they would see what the promised "New Deal" would bring forth. Little or no news came out of Macon for many weeks. Sparks took off in December for a vacation in Hot Springs as the old year, the very worst of the great depression, came to an end.

### THE 1933 SEASON

First news out of Macon quarters was a denial by Sparks that Downie Bros. would be on rails in 1933. Since Sparks had successfully operated a railroad show for so long it was assumed by many that he would in due time convert his motorized show to rails. These rumors became more frequent as the Downie show continued to grow. There were many in the circus fraternity who believed that only a small or medium sized circus could be successfully transported by truck. However, despite the many rumors Sparks would continue to deny he had any ideas of returning to the railroad field.

In mid-January Jerome T. Harriman was appointed as Downie general agent. He was quoted in the Jan. 14, 1933 Billboard as follows.

"It will be great to be back home with Downie Bros. Circus and under the

leadership of Charles Sparks. This showman has demonstrated his leadership in building up one of the greatest institutions of its kind in the world. We are going forward into 1933 with high hopes and renewed faith in the capacity of the American people to appreciate the best of entertainment."

Several weeks later additional information on the advance staff was released. Fred Kilgore would be contracting agent, Irish Horan, general press representative, and Clyde H. Williard, manager of the advertising cars with a crew of 14 billers using 5 trucks and 4 sedans.

Actually, very little news came from Macon in early 1933 as to the extent of preparation for the new season. Although the motor and other equipment was repaired and a thorough paint job given it, it is evident that considerably less work was done than during the previous two winters. No mention was made of any new vehicles being built. By this time most of the heavier loads were on semis and Sparks had spent a goodly sum in upgrading the equipment to his standard. Sparks, also a cautious and very shrewd businessman, no doubt desired to sit back and wait out the situation before pumping any more large sums into the show.

The color scheme for baggage trucks of red with lettering in white, or silver, was continued as long as Sparks owned the show. Cages and parade vehicles were painted and decorated in a variety of colors. The George Washington and Ben Hur semis continued to be the most outstanding of the parade trucks.

No mention of any new canvas was made at the beginning and for the first weeks of the 1933 season and it is believed the show retained the same canvas spread that finished the previous season.

Photo No. 13 — Buck Owens, Hollywood movie cowboy, on Downie Bros. lot, season of 1932. Photo by William Koford (Al Conover Collection).

Photo No. 11 — Four horse chariots in parade at Savannah, Ga., Oct. 26, 1932. Photo by Charles Bernard.





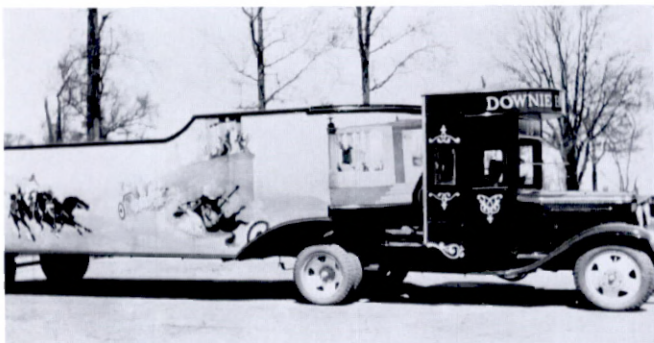


Photo No. 16 — Newly built "Ben Hur" tableau semi at Macon, Ga. winter-quarters early spring of 1933. The side painting depicts Ben Hur's Roman Chariot race. This semi was used to transport horses and in parade a trampoline was placed on the flooring and several performers went through their routine. Photo by Eddie Jackson.

The first week in March saw the new Roosevelt administration take office. Almost immediately came the famous "bank holiday" which played havoc for a few days with shows which had already opened but since Downie was still in quarters the effect was minimal. It was the beginning of the alphabet soup days in Washington with new regulations, laws, and programs coming forth in an almost endless stream. The AAA, WPA, CCC, and later the NRA and the hundred and one other anti-depression gimicks of the New Deal was upon the land. Hind-sight has later shown the folly of many of these programs but at the time showmen as well as their fellow countrymen were willing to try anything that might put a few dollars in the public's pocket and hence to the ticket wagon.

A new State of Georgia regulation which vastly helped the Downie show came in the early spring of 1933 when Governor Eugene "Ole Gene" Talmadge, father of current U.S. Senator Herman Talmadge, fulfilled a campaign pledge by signing an executive order fixing the price of all auto tags, trucks as well, at a flat rate of \$3.00. In 1932 the cheapest tag was \$11.25 so this was a real monetary saving for not only Downie Bros. but for the many other shows which then ordered Georgia tags by mail. This unique low cost tag regulation remained in effect during Governor Talmadge's first two terms as governor and was not changed until his successor took office in 1937.

The April 15, 1933 Billboard which announced that the show would open in Macon on April 20 said that the big feature of the performance would be Jack Hoxie, Hollywood western screen star and his company, including Dixie Starr, his leading lady in films. New performers would also include Clara

Codona in an aerial number, the four Betters wire act, Gonzales sisters, and Miss Violetta, head balancing trapeze act. Theresa Morales would be back doing her heel and toe catches on the flying trapeze and several other Downie mainstays would return. The clown contingent would be headed by Minert De Orlo and Roy Leonhardt and their "Funny Ford".

The 1933 staff was as follows: Charles Sparks, general manager; Charles Katz, asst. manager; Frank McGuyre, legal adjuster; Clint Shuford, treas; William (Bill) Morgan, press agent back on the show; Joe Gilligan, master of transportation; Jim Davis, cookhouse; T.O. Premont, electrical engineer; W.A. McNeill, chief mechanic; Steve Roberts, supt. of

Photo No. 15 — Downie Bros. one sheet upright was typical stock sheet used by the show in the early 1930's. This litho depicting an iron jaw act was actually posted in 1934. Color scheme has title in red with white trim, and "Circus" in yellow with red trim. Girl in foreground has yellow wardrobe and background is a purple-blue hue. Circus World Museum (Baraboo, Wis.) Photo.



Photo No. 17 — Rodney Harris (at left in white uniform) and his Downie Bros. big show band in 1933. The George Washington semi is in rear. Noted circus musician and composer, C.E. Duble, stands with trombone fourth from right. Photo by Eddie Jackson.

canvas with George Werner, asst; Larry Davis, supt. of elephants; and Jimmy Gallagher, banner advertising man. Note, other officials and department heads are listed elsewhere in this article.

The show opened as scheduled under Shrine auspices in Macon and the April 29, 1933 Billboard covered the event as follows.

"Two Capacity Houses Greet Downie Bros. Circus at Macon Opening. Show has 24 displays, costumes are brilliant and most stylish, Rodney Harris, musical director, Allen Hauser, equestrian director." It continued.

"Show opens with a pageant of the Orient, followed by the introduction (loud speaker system) of Jack Hoxie. The program follows, Riding dogs by Charles Poplin and Irving Arnold; leaps over 5 elephants featuring Billy Pape with Stanley White, Johnny Bossler, Frank Perez, Pedro Morales, Shorty Hinkle, Mickey O'Brien, Roy Leonhardt, and Minert De Orlo. (De Orlo works as clown cop throughout show).

"Clown interruption of hippodrome track; elephants presented by Marion Shuford, Ella Harris and Leo Rock; comedy acrobats by Leonhardt, Bossler, and White; balancing act by The Larkins, and roman rings by the Walters duo, featuring little Maxine.

"Foot slides by Concha and Pedro Morales; bareback number by George Hanneford, Isabel McCree, and Oscar Lowande Jr.; swinging ladders; Shetland ponies by Allen Hauser, Charles Poplin, and Irving Arnold.

"Funny Ford with Leonhardt and Bossler; tight wire tactics by the Butters Troupe; comedy boxing by Hanneford and Pape; aerial boxing by Hanneford and Pape; aerial head balancing by Miss Violetta; looping the loop by Theresa and Concha Morales; elephants with Ella Harris.

"Aerial act, Clara Codona, Jamie



Walters, and the Butters sisters; one man baseball game by Leonhardt; dogs by Misses Rock and Poplin; along with Allen Hauser's pigs; trapeze act with Clara Codona and Mis Harris, and double trapeze by Aerial Walters.

"Hanneford Family in bareback comedy riding; dancing horses with Miss Shuford, Viola Hauser, Clara Codona, Leo Rock, Ella Harris, Jewell Poplin, Emma Butters, Pearl Carmichael, Joan Butters, Juanita Williams, and Irving Arnold.

"High perch by Larkins Troupe and Aerial Papes; heel and toe trapeze catches by Theresa Morales, and the grand finale, a Pageant of the Golden West entitled, 'An Indian Fantasy'."

Admission prices were 25 and 50 cents and the Wild West aftershow, announced not as a wild west show but an exhibition of actual scenes from Hoxie's Western pictures went for 10 and 25 cents.

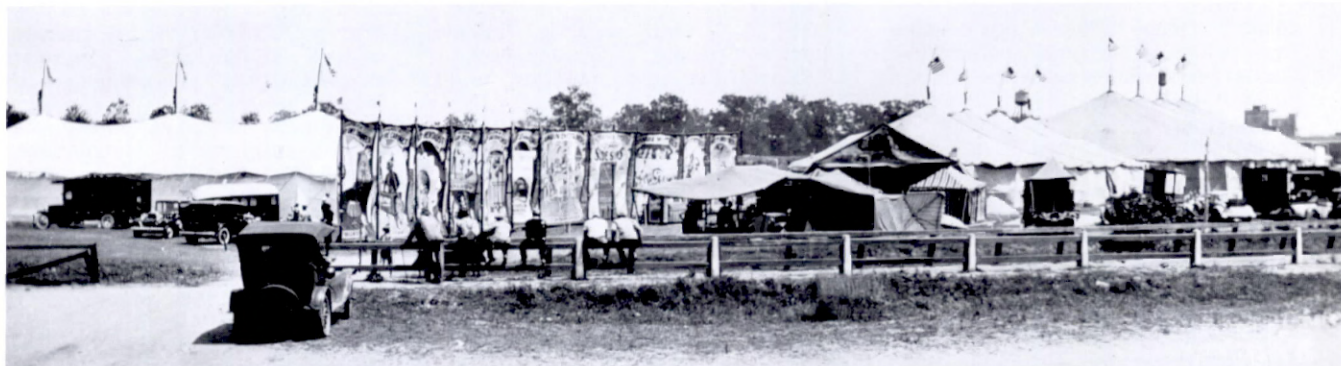
circus of the year there. Actually Downie was scheduled to play two days in Washington itself but a slight rerouting took place which put the show into Alexandria, Va. on the 5th and Annapolis, Md. for the 6th.

The May 15, 1933 Billboard in commenting on early season Downie activities said that so far business had been very satisfactory. The crowd at Charlotte was on the straw, Danville, Va. had sellouts at both shows, and all Virginia stands had been good. It was mentioned that two clever child acts had been added to the program, Maxine Butters, 6, was doing a latter number at one end of the big top while Dorothy Morales, also 6, was doing the same kind of act at the other. Allen Hauser had the program running rapidly, Jimmie Davis was always ready with breakfast in the cookhouse when the boys arrived on the lot, Jack Hoxie and Dixie Starr were busy greeting the

short spell. Rain had been heavy during several Pennsylvania stands but business had continued to be good. A severe storm hit at Poughkeepsie, N.Y., May 20, and it looked for a time that the big top would blow down but fortunately it didn't.

The June 3 Billboard said that while Downie was in close vicinity to New York City several from the show visited Ringling-Barnum at Brooklyn, N.Y. playing its initial under canvas date of the season. Irish Horan was getting plenty of very good press publicity, Milt Robbins was back on the show from his illness, and business had been very much better than in 1932.

Downie wasn't the only show enjoying vastly improved business. By the latter part of May two other motorized shows, Wheeler and Almond, and Hunt's were reporting better takes. After the first month or so into the 1933 season it was generally



Additional members of the advertising cars were listed as James R. Ramsey, boss billposter; H.M. Kilpatrick, boss lithographer, and William Falconberry, boss bannerman. The show continued to use mainly billing paper from Erie. A new design was created to advertise Jack Hoxie's appearance and a number of special sheets were used for various acts such as the Morales, Hannefords, etc. as well as some very attractive stock paper.

Following the Macon opening the show moved to Atlanta for two days, April 21-22, then took off on a long Sunday run of 300 miles to play Charlotte, N.C. on April 24.

The early season route differed from the past two years as the show moved rapidly northward into southern Virginia and then over to the Atlantic coast rather than into West Virginia, Kentucky, or southern Ohio. Winston-Salem was the second of only two North Carolina dates with first Virginia stand coming at Danville, April 26. Stands at Roanoke, Lynchburg, and Charlottesville followed and the show then moved to Portsmouth on May 1. Next came Norfolk, Newport News, and Richmond as the show then headed into the Washington, D.C. area, being the first

**Photo No. 18 — Downie Bros. on lot at Central City Park, Macon, Ga. winter-quarters the day before the 1933 season opened. Photo by Eddie Jackson.**

kids and grownups that crowded around their tent, and the parade was receiving many compliments. While at Richmond the show entertained Confederate veterans at the matinee.

The show moved into Pennsylvania at York, May 8, with four additional Keystone state stands to follow. A week in New Jersey came next, beginning with Dover, May 13, and ending with Glen Rock, May 18th. Two days were played in New York at Newburg and Poughkeepsie, then it was into Connecticut at Stamford, May 22, to begin the New England tour.

The Billboard said there had been several accidents among performers of late, Georgia Whitesides, iron-jaw act, sustained an ankle injury when she fell while being hoisted to the top of the tent for the afternoon performance in Newport News, Va., and George Hanneford suffered a broken arm recently but had continued to work in the performance although his arm was in splints. Milt Robbins, sideshow manager, had to be hospitalized in Reading, Pa. due to a very severe cold and was away from the show for a

conceded by most shows that economic conditions had improved and consequently this was being very pleasantly reflected at the ticket wagons. The 1933 season had begun with fewer circuses than in many years. There were now only 3 railroad circuses, Ringling-Barnum, 90 cars, Hagenbeck-Wallace, 40, and Al G. Barnes, 30, all Ringling owned. New Ringling general manager and senior vice president, Sam W. Gumpertz, had taken off the road the popular Sells-Floto Circus, another depression casualty to join two other former Ringling railers, Sparks, and John Robinson, which had earlier fell victims to the great depression. Happily, all three of the remaining rail shows were now showing much improved business and Hagenbeck-Wallace, presenting a limited number of street parades, was headed for a great year.

Downie's initial New England stand at Stamford saw the show on a lot outside the city limits but parade was on the main streets of town. Schools were closed all day for the circus, a practice quite common in places in earlier times, but rare as late as 1933. Most schools did permit kids time off to view the street parade and dismissed them in time to catch the matinee.



The show, coming into New England several weeks earlier than customary and playing somewhat larger towns, ran into strong opposition from other shows at many spots. Opposition billing was especially heavy at Hartford, Conn., May 26. At Norwich, Conn., May 27, the night house was hurt due to a terrific rain and wind storm which struck at opening time but in most spots business generally continued to be fine.

The June 17, 1933 Billboard said that Downie Bros. gave three shows at Fall River, Mass., May 30, Decoration Day, two in the afternoon and one at night, which was a turnaway. Other notes said the new parade wardrobe is to be added and that the Hiawatha, Indian theme closing spec is beautiful. Many performers lately have appeared on radio shows which were arranged for by Irish Horan, and Jack Hoxie, visited hospitals and sanitariums nearly every day to entertain the patients. Hoxie, a very personable man, was proving to be a prime attraction for the show and was getting great publicity. New England, especially, seemed to love the various Hollywood western stars which appeared with many circuses during this period. Tom Mix who had played through this area with Sells-Floto during the 1929-31 seasons had stirred up the natives and they were now asking for more. Jack Hoxie, although a considerably lesser light than Mix, was filling the bill admirably for Downie Bros.

After two Massachusetts stands, Downie went into Rhode Island to play Newport and Providence, then returned to the Bay State for a rather lengthy stay of 17 stands. Competition from other shows was tough. Ringling-Barnum, was in opposition at several stands, including Hartford, and Sam B. Dill's Circus was competing for the natives spare change at others.

The June 24, 1933 Billboard said that Downie had been playing around the Boston section, jumps were short, and the advance and press staff had been able to visit quite a bit back on the lot. The new parade wardrobe arrived and was favorably received. There was a bad storm at Malden, Mass., June 9, just before the night opening. An example of some of the short moves in the area was as follows. From Watertown to Waltham it was only two miles and a little more than three to Medford. The Billboard also noted there were numerous shows playing eastern territory this season, all of them touching near Downie at spots. In addition to Downie there were Ringling-Barnum, Hagenbeck-Wallace, Walter L. Main, Sam B. Dill, Barnett Bros., and Allen Bros. wild west. Evidently the show's general agents agreed the east was where the money was to be found.

A severe storm hit Downie at Cambridge, Mass., June 16, but came after the matinee and before the evening

show. Downie played Brookline, Mass., June 19, under auspices of the Elks. This section, considered the most wealthy in Boston, had not seen a circus in modern times. The press department got a wealth of publicity and the stand resulted in two turnaways which was far above expectations. Despite the numerous shows in the area the Downie advance came up with several very fresh towns, including Hudson, Mass., June 20, which had not had a circus in many years. Although New England had been extremely good to the show it was decided to pass up Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont this season, and after the date at Pittsfield, Mass., June 23, Downie moved over into New York at Glen Falls.



Photo No. 19 — Hollywood film cowboy, Jack Hoxie, and his wife, Dixie Starr, on Downie Bros. lot, season of 1933. Photo by Eddie Jackson.

In recent weeks the show had experienced a number of bad storms and another real mean one struck at Ogdensburg, N.Y., June 28, at 3:45 p.m. and again it appeared the big top would go down but the efforts of the canvas crew kept it intact. The show remained in New York for a dozen stands and generally it was pleasant trouping. Orphans were entertained at many places. At Oswego, June 30, Sparks purchased for the show several head of beautiful ring stock which would be broken by Allen Hauser and Irvin Arnold.

The July 15, 1933 Billboard said the show was getting many compliments on the clean and natty appearance of

the ushers, candy butchers, animal men, etc. It also said that Tommy Hanneford and Allen Hauser, Jr., the kid cowboys were sporting new saddles and wardrobe and that the parade each day was under the direction of Joe Gilligan, master of transportation.

The Downie troupers held their first outing of the season during the Sunday off in Courtland, N.Y. A local college band was engaged to play for dancing as part of the festivities.

Following the stand at Olean, July 7, the show played Bradford, Pa., then immediately returned to New York for Jamestown, then on into Pennsylvania for five dates beginning with Warren, July 11.

A single date in Ohio was at Warren, July 17, then the show came back into Pennsylvania for ten stands. A return to New York occurred at Endicott, July 29, where Ora Loretta, who did an aerial bars act joined. Noted circus authority, Townsend Walsh, visited at Schnectady, August 3, and wrote in The Billboard that four-fifths of the audience remained for the Jack Hoxie aftershow. He also praised the Morales family acts, the leaps, George Hanneford riding act, and the street parade. E.J. Kelly of the Century Photo Co. visited at Middletown, August 5, and took several photos of the show. He also wrote to the Billboard that Downie Bros. was a high class show with big top complete in every detail, using three regulation rings, with high back chairs for reserves, large bandstand, public address system, and said that the prop men were very neat in their maroon with black trim uniforms. Kelly observed that 75 percent of the audience, remained for the aftershow.

The show ran an advertisement in the Aug 5, 1933 Billboard which read as follows.

"Downie Bros. Circus Wants, Seal act, feature aerial act, wild west people, 2 good clowns who can leap. People must be young and neat appearance." It was the first ad the show had run in some time. During the worst of the depression it was unnecessary to advertise since the show was usually flooded with applicants, both from performers and workingmen.

The better times continued on through the hot summer, a time which for the past few seasons, had been very dull for most shows. A number of circuses were enlarging somewhat and improving their performances during the mid-season. No shows reported they were "hurting" at the present time.

Although the depression was far from ended things were gradually getting better. Coming out of the depression was a slow, progressive matter and it would linger on for several more seasons, in fact the real lush years of





the late 20's would not return for most circuses until after the beginning of World War II. As the 1933 season wound on most of the nation's populace had accumulated a few dollars and they were amusement hungry, having suffered through three very lean years. The overall amusement industry got its biggest boost from the highly successful Century of Progress World's Fair in Chicago which opened in 1933. Assembled in Chicago was one of the greatest midways of all time. Scores of former carnival and circus showmen, Zack Terrell, manager of the 1932 Sells-Floto Circus included, teamed up to make this midway one of lasting memory. The fair was almost an instant success, it drew well, and the enthusiasm of it spilled over into all segments of indoor and outdoor amusements. It gave the badly sagging industry a real shot in the arm.

Downie left New York following its stand in Middletown and went back into Pennsylvania for dates at Shamokin and Carlisle. Two stands in Maryland came next, followed by three in Pennsylvania, and then the show played Holiday's Cove, W.Va., August 15, for its only date in that state in 1933. Moving into Ohio the following day at New Philadelphia Downie played a number of stands which ordinarily came at the early part of the season. After four Ohio dates the show was at Ashland Ky., August 21, then returned to Ohio for one more stand, Portsmouth, August 22. The Sam B. Dill Circus had been there on August 12. Just prior to the town seeing two shows within ten days the city administration, realizing its high license fees were keeping circuses out since none had played there so far this season, proceeded to reduce the fees. The original license of \$200.00 was cut to \$50.00 for Dill and \$100.00 for Downie.

When the show returned to Kentucky to play Maysville, August 23, the Billboard sent a reporter from its Cincy office to interview Sparks and to do a detailed review of the show. Sparks primarily was asked to again clarify the persistent rumors that he was returning to railroad show operations. He said he had no intention of giving up his motorized show and was quoted as follows.

"Downie Bros. Circus will continue as a motorized show at least until the

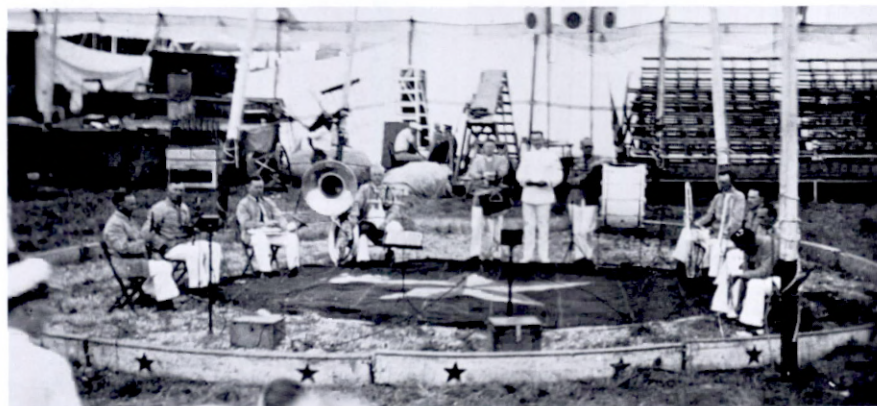
Photo No. 20 — Downie Bros. "third fleet" stopped alongside road in early season 1933. Semis, left to right, are No. 200, George Washington tableau, carrying camels; No. 98, Ben Hur tableau, with horses, and two loaded with the elephants. Photo by Eddie Jackson.

present motor truck equipment becomes obsolete. I have at present approximately \$100,000 invested in motorized equipment and until I have realized on my investment there will be no switch in the method of transporting the show."

Sparks also said that Downie Bros. had enjoyed phenomenal business in the New England states and in New York state earlier in the season. He admitted since the westward trek began three weeks ago, some stands in Pennsylvania and nearby states failed to give the business he expected.

The Sept. 2, 1933 Billboard carried the review, stating that the show has a fine program, and mentioned that the special parade wardrobe, an innovative, feature, was modernized costumes for the lady riders (Mrs. Sparks idea), natty, modernistic jackets and divided skirts, in replacement of heavy bespangled and tights attire. Admission prices are 25 and 50 cents, reserves 50 and 1.00, and aftershow 10 and 15 cents. The show was not using any local tie-ins, such as merchant's discount tickets used by a

Photo No. 21 — Downie Bros. band in big top center ring for pre show concert at Warren, Ohio, July 17, 1933. Director Rodney Harris is in center rear with white uniform. Pfenig Collection.



number of motorized shows such as Sam B. Dill. The article said the show had a newly delivered big top, a 120 ft. round with three 40's. Other canvas sizes listed were a 70 with three 30's menagerie, sideshow, 50 with three 30's, and dressing room, 60 x 20. (Author's note, if these tent sizes are correct, then the show was now using its largest bit top so far. A 120 ft. round would necessitate two rows of quarter poles. The menagerie top is somewhat larger also than that used the previous season. A possibility exists these tent sizes were overstated, however for sure the show did have a 120 ft. round big top to begin the 1934 season, said to be a new tent. If in fact a 120 ft. top was delivered in mid-season 1933 then in all probability it would still have been used to begin the following season.)

The Billboard reviewer gave considerably more details on the performance than appeared at the opening of the season, and it is felt to be of sufficient importance to run in its entirety at this time.

The 1933 performance as presented in Maysville, Ky., Aug 23, 1933 was as follows.

"No. 1 Tournament, Ella Harris, prima donna-with pigeons entree; Concha and Theresa Morales dancing on platforms on elephants.

2. Introduction of Jack Hoxie.

3. Riding monks and dogs on ponies in rings 1 and 3. Charles Poplin and Irwin Arnold.

4. Leaps — all somersaults except several clown stunts. Billy Pape featured at finish over 5 elephants.

5. Clowns — jigsaw puzzle.

6. Elephants in each ring. Ella Harris, Marion Shuford, and Miss Rock, finishing with one of the bulls doing the rumba on the track.

7. Walters Trio; Spanish rings in 1; Leonhardt, Bossler, and White, comedy acrobatics in 3; The Larkins 'Furniture Movers' (forehead balancing over angle ladder) featured in center ring. Fine number.

8. Pedro Morales, forward foot slide, Concha Morales, backward foot



slide on long cable. Heavily applauded.

9. Principal riding acts in all rings; Oscar Lowande, Jr., Isabel McCree, George Hanneford. All neatly executed. Clown fill-ins.
10. Swinging ladders — Marion Shuford, Jamie Walters, Maxine Walters (juvenile, already a star), Clara Codona, Miss Rock, Ruby Hoyt, Helen Butters, Georgia Butters, and Inez Butters.
11. Liberty number — ponies in 1 and 3, Charles Poplin and Irwin Arnold, 8 horses in center, Allen Hauser, very good.
12. Funny Ford on track — Leonhardt, Bossler, and De Orlo. They really put it over. Good comedy in chatter and action.
13. Tight wire, featured in center ring — Butters Troupe, one man, 3 girls, all work neatly. Man did Russian and other dance steps as feature. Scored audience appreciation.
14. Clown walkarounds.
15. (Specially announced). Miss Ora, center ring, starting on wide single traps, then to a high stationary bar on which the artist swiftly and gracefully performed really great routines with seemingly endless giant swings. Also in this number, rings and loop the loop, over 1 and 3, Concha and Theresa Morales.
16. Concert announcement.
17. Elephants, 5, in center ring. Masterly put thru their routines by Ella Harris, closing with trick laydowns and setups.
18. Iron jaw — Jamie Walters and Clara Codona over 1 and 3. Helen and Georgie Butters over center. Clever.
19. Roy Leonhardt, one man ball game (pantomime). Announced. Drew continual laughter.
20. Trained dogs, 1 and 3, Miss Rock and Miss Poplin; trained pigs, center, Allen Hauser. Scored hits.
21. Aerial, single traps over 1 and 3. Ella Harris (did a snappy ankle drop on forward swing) and Clara Codona (grace personified); double traps over center. Two Walters, worked high, speedy, and skillfully.
22. Big Feature. The Hannefords, featuring the comedy and straight riding of George Hanneford, the 'Riding Fool'. Two men, 2 women, 4 horses. Warmly applauded, took non forced encores — the audience wanted em.
23. Introduction of Jack Hoxie and Dixie Starr, his leading woman in pictures, relative to aftershow.
24. Menage number — 9 horses ridden by Helen and Inez Butters, Ruby Hoyt, June Poplin, Clara Codona, Ella Harris, Marion Shuford, Miss Rock, and Irwin Arnold. Very attractive. Finished with cakewalk on track.
25. Carrying perch — Billy, Concha



Photo No. 22 — Downie Bros. sideshow personnel and band in front of bannerline, season of 1933. Pfening collection.

Morales. The Larkins, neat, applause. Included whirls on single poles and concluded with bare shoulder grinds by both teams on special rigging.

26. Specially announced, feature over center ring with Theresa Morales on single trapeze in sensational backward heel and toe drops, including a forward to heels. Excellent.
27. The performance closed with a spec. Hiawatha, Indian pageant with special costuming, teepees, Indian dances with appropriate music, and Ella Harris delivering a vocal number with voice amplifier."

The show moved southward rapidly through Kentucky and went into Tennessee at Knoxville, August 28. Following Greenville and Johnson City it was then into North Carolina at Asheville, August 31, and September 1 saw the show at Greenville, S.C. After only two dates in South Carolina the show returned to North Carolina at Gastonia, Sept. 4, the rest of the month saw the show moving back and forth between the two Carolinas. It dipped over into Georgia for a single stand at Augusta, September 15. The trade publications were uncommonly silent on Downie activities during this time but The Billboard did mention that the show had a good date at Statesville, N.C. on September 21 when a hundred orphans were also entertained. Anderson, S.C., October 4, was the final date in the Carolinas and next the show moved into Georgia with first stand coming at Athens, on October 5.

It was at Athens that the author first caught the Downie Bros. Circus. I recall it was a warm and sunny day and there was a good crowd at the matinee on the old Hillcrest Avenue circus grounds. I was a student in junior high at the time and they permitted us to

leave classes and walk down a half block to witness the street parade go by about 11:30. Then at 1 p.m. classes were dismissed for the day so that we could attend the matinee, which I did. My overall impression of the show was extremely favorable. Although I had viewed the Gentry Bros. Dog and Pony Show a year earlier which was motorized, the Downie show was the first large, full fledged circus I had seen that moved by trucks. The street parade was the first in Athens since Sparks in 1928 and drew large crowds all along the route of march.

Unfortunately I didn't make many written notes that day but did record the following on the menagerie.

"In the menagerie were 5 Asiatic elephants, including one tusker (Teddy), and 4 Asiatic camels (two humped). Contents of the 9 cages in the menagerie top were as follows.

1. 3 lions
2. 3 lions
3. 10 monkeys
4. 1 jaguar and 1 leopard.
5. 1 hyena and 1 black bear.
6. 1 tiger
7. 1 lion
8. 1 lion
9. dogs and pigs.

All cages were the typical two den vehicles Downie was using at the time with exception of the dog and pig truck which had small individual compartments.

In later years I learned that the five elephants I saw that day were Teddy, Tena, Babe, Queen, and Pinto.

The following day's stand at Gainesville provided some excitement and a tragedy was narrowly averted. During the afternoon while the aftershow was still in progress fire of undetermined origin destroyed the menagerie top. There were only a few people in the menagerie when the fire was discovered by candy butchers working at a peanut and pop corn machine. The alarm was spread and through heroic efforts of the show's personnel the elephants, camels, and caged animals were removed from the





**Photo No. 23 — Hanneford Family of riders, Downie Bros. Circus, season of 1933. Left to right are Oscar Lowande, Isabel McCree, George Hanneford, Kathryn Hanneford, and Charles Poplin. Photo by Eddie Jackson.**

blazing tent without serious injury. Two lion cubs and a hyena were scorched but their injuries were minor and some of the cage trucks were slightly scorched as they were driven through a veritable wall of fire. For a while a tremendous conflagration threatened as flying sparks set fire to the big top and sideshow but in all instances the new blazes were quickly extinguished before any headway was gained. Shortly thereafter slight repairs were made to the big top and sideshow canvas. The crowd attending the concert was orderly and there was no effort of panic as they left quickly. At night the menagerie was corralled and this was the custom until a new top was received. Sparks telephoned to Atlanta (probably Fulton Bag and Cotton Mills) for a 60 with three 30's tent but no top of that size was immediately available but he hoped one would arrive by time the show played Rome on October 9. In all probability the top was delivered in only a few days.

The show moved into Alabama following four Georgia dates and was at Gdsden on October 10. Next came Anniston, Sylacauga, Alexander City, and Lanett. Sparks told The Billboard that business during the swing across Georgia and the five stands in Alabama were very good, far above expectations. Sylacauga, a cotton mill town, was one of the banner days of the season. Sparks also said that he had originally planned to close for the season immediately after the Georgia state fair in Macon and move into quarters at Central City Park where the fair exhibits, but that business during the past couple of weeks had been so fine he had decided to add another month to the season.

The show returned to Georgia at LaGrange, October 16, and played a total of 15 stands in the state, including two days in Savannah, October 25-26. Leaving Georgia after Moultrie, November 2, the show went into the Florida Pan-Handle to catch Tallahassee, Marianna, and Panama City. It was then back into Alabama at

Dothan, November 7, followed by three additional stands in the state. Next came Columbus, Georgia on November 12 where the 1933 season came to a close.

Moving immediately to its Macon quarters the show then retired for the winter following a very pleasing and profitable season. Sparks gave no details on the season but it was common knowledge the show had done considerably better than the previous year.

Nothing much in way of news came from Macon for the remainder of the year. The Dec. 30, 1933 Billboard did say that Billy and Concha Pape were on the program of the Shrine Indoor Circus in Macon doing shoulder perch and foot slide and in Atlanta they did a perch act in connection with the World's Fair Follies. Later they went on vaudeville dates.

#### **ISAAC MARCKS NOTES ON DOWNIE BROS. STAND AT PITTSFIELD, MASS. JUNE 23, 1933.**

The Downie Bros. Circus cookhouse unit arrived here about 10 p.m. the night before show time (June 22). There were a water truck, semi, and a straight bed truck. The cook tent has 4 center poles with 20 tables while the kitchen tent has 4 center poles.

The show's 25 trucks and trailers (semis) arrived about 5 a.m. on June 23 with rest of the show coming in by twos or threes up to noontime.

The tents are: 4 pole big top; 4 pole menagerie; 3 pole side show; 2 candy stands; a lunch stand; 6 small tents.

The parade given at noon consisted of 22 vehicles, lead stock, 5 ladies on horses, clown cart, two ladies on horses, 2 chariots, 8 ponies, Funny Ford, 5 elephants, and 4 camels.

The trucks are: 2 semis for elephants; 2 semis for ring horses; Hanneford horse truck; semi, stake and chain; semi, light plant; semi, big top canvas (used also for big show bandstand); pole semi; semi, stringers; semi, chairs; semi, jacks; semi, planks; truck for sideshow; truck, menagerie truck, lunch stand; ticket truck; 2 chariots, clown cart; small cart; two stake pullers; 8 truck cages.

All baggage trucks are painted red and most are Chevrolets.

Seating — blue seats on ends — long side grandstand has 11 sections; on short side are 6 sections, all 8 high, in all 959 chairs.

Menagerie — 4 center poles, 12 quarters poles, houses 5 elephants, 4 camels; 8 cages contain, lion, tiger, 3 lioness, lioness with cubs, monkeys, baboon, bear, and leopard. Candy stand located in the menagerie top.

Side show — had 8 banners, 2 double banners, stage, 2 ticket sellers, sound system, 3 center poles, 6 quarter poles, band stand; attractions include Mitzi, mentalist; musical act; sword swallower; rag pictures; sword box; knife thrower; four Hawaiians; magic; bag puncher; trained cockatoos, and Punch and Judy.

Dressing tent and ring stock has dressing rooms on each end with ring stock in the middle — most performers have their own cars and house trailers. Jack Hoxie has a special tent. Six riders are with him.

The Hanneford Troupe has 4 horses.

The afternoon show had a big house with some sitting on the ground. The show was very good and at night they had to give two performances.

The cookhouse units left about 6 p.m. and it was about 1:30 a.m. when the heavy trucks left, while the horse trucks didn't leave until daylight. Their next stop was Glen Falls, N.Y.

**Photo No 24 — Teresa Morales, featured Downie Bros. aerial performer, standing on platform on back of Teddy ready for opening spec, season of 1933. Photo by Eddie Jackson.**





# STALKING THE APOLLONICON

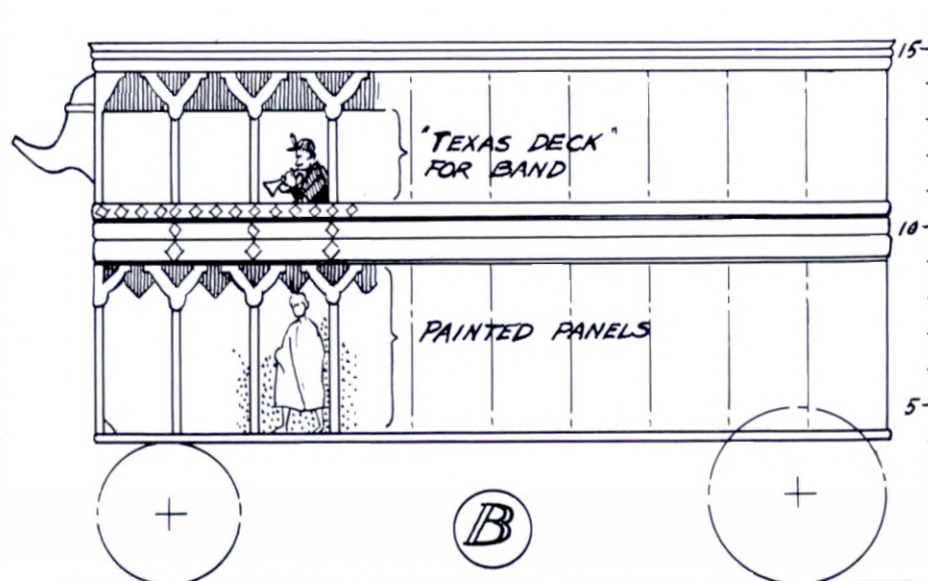
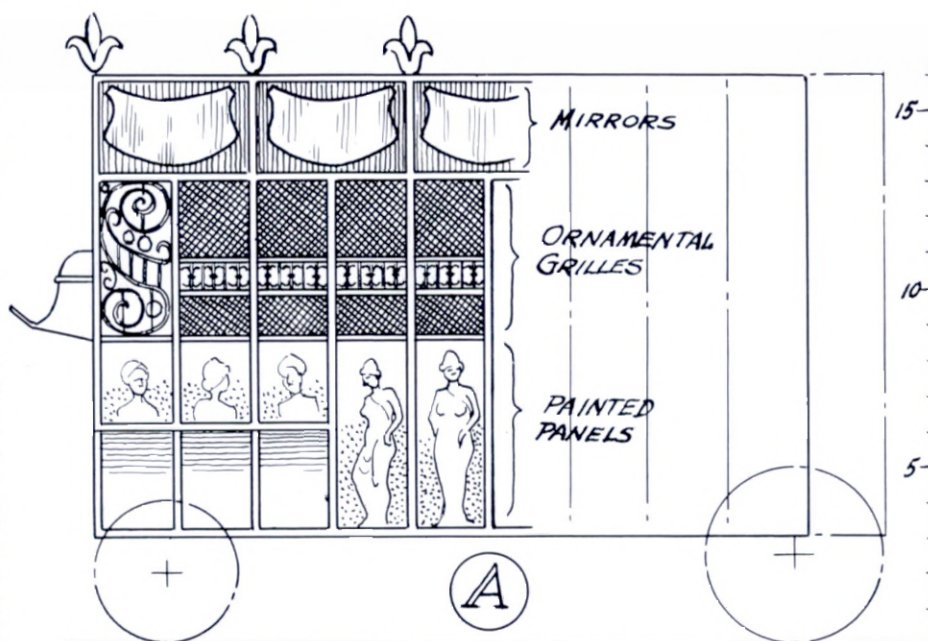
By C. H. Amidon

Apollo was quite a guy. To the ancient Greeks and Romans he epitomized light, healing, music, poetry, prophecy and manly beauty. And around the middle of the nineteenth century he was still popular with the classical name-droppers. When Dr. Spalding in 1849 announced his large organ wagon, it was christened the "Apollonicon", or "image of Apollo". (Wagon historians, had they been active at that time, would have probably called it "the Apollo tab".)

The name Apollonicon was by no means original with Dr. Spalding. Starting in July 1833, the American Museum in New York featured a mechanical organ by that name. Odell reports from contemporary advertisements that the instrument "imitated a full band, or thunder, or the singing of birds, or an organ". During the 1840's there were also two large organs in London, both bearing the Apollonicon name. The first had been erected by Flight and Robson, organ builders in 1817. It was a combined orchestrion and organ, having 1900 pipes, 45 stops, and could be played manually by five players or automatically by three barrels.<sup>1</sup> It was originally powered by a steam engine, but was later changed to manual cranking. In 1840 it was enlarged and moved to the Royal Music Hall. The second organ was a large theater model, installed in conjunction with a panorama called "The Destruction of Lisbon". The owners were sued for pirating the name, but their enterprise folded anyway.<sup>2</sup>

By 1849, when Dr. Spalding was about to "spring" his Appolonicon, it is interesting to note which entertainment features topped the hit parade. In 1846 Odell had noted the appearance of a band called the Apolloneons at the Brooklyn Institute, and the next two seasons there was Beckman's band of Ethiopian Apollonians. New York had an Apollo Saloon on Canal Street, and the Apollo Rooms where entertainment was offered. The popular entertainers were:

Minstrels and variety shows.  
Tableaux Vivants - the law had pounced on the first female living models in 1847, although they claimed to be posing as classical statues.  
Panoramas, such as John Banvard's painting of the entire Mississippi River.  
Circus  
Musical concerts.



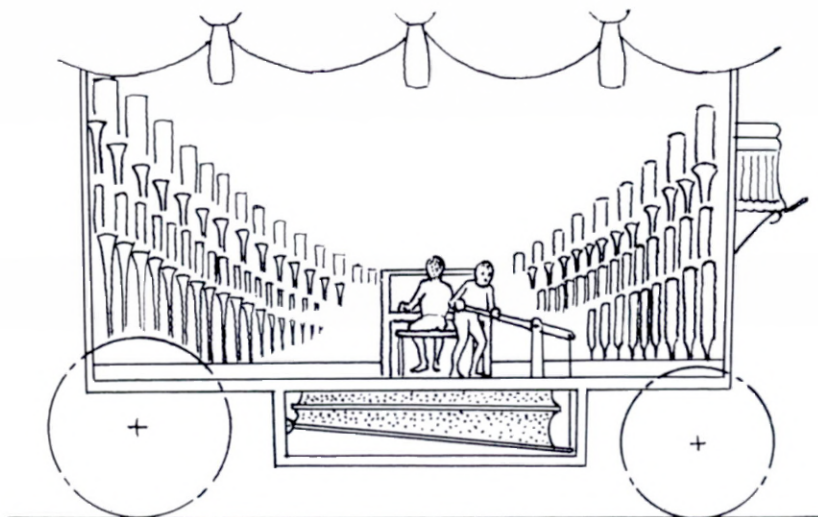
TWO CUTS OF THE APOLLONICON COMPARED: A. From Spalding & Rogers letterhead, thus about 1856. Apparently shows original configuration of

wagon with organ inside. B. From Spalding & Rogers herald of 1858, apparently showing conversion to a bandwagon.

In a more general way, there was a preoccupation with mechanically produced music. Even the church organ was slowly defeating Puritan

prejudice, and making its way into more churches. And now an organ was about to go on tour, in an ornate circus wagon!





### Debut of the Apollonicon

The New York Tribune carried the following announcement on Tuesday, April 12, 1849: "The Apollonicon (sic) - Our citizens will have an opportunity today of seeing and hearing a novelty in the shape of a monster chariot, containing a huge musical instrument, built by Henry Erben for Spalding & Rogers North American Circus. This instrument will start from Union Square at eleven o'clock, and after passing through Broadway and several other principal streets, leave by steamboat for Albany on the way West."<sup>4</sup>

The following day this announcement appeared: "The elegant ornamental painted wire-work with which the Apollonicon - the mammoth hand-organ which paraded our streets yesterday - was covered, was executed by Messrs. Lee & Co., wire window shade makers, 309 Bleeker St."<sup>5</sup>

And the following week the Scientific American added the following data: "Travelling Organ - An organ of large dimensions has been built by Mr. Henry Erben of this city for Dr. G. R. Spaulding of Albany, to accompany a travelling circus. It is named the Apollonicon (sic), and was driven through the streets of our city on Thursday of last week with an organist who performed some beautiful airs on it. The carriage was built by Mr. J. Stephenson, and is a beautiful piece of workmanship, and so constructed with springs that the huge organ, 20 feet long, 10 feet high and 6 wide, is not in the least affected by jolting. The organ has two octaves of pedals and eight stops: three composition pedals to connect with keys, besides coupling stops. With this a travelling band is to hear its dead march performed *a la grande mode*."<sup>6</sup> The last sentence apparently refers to Dr. Spaulding's intention to use his organ to play for the performance, thus eliminating a band. The dimensional data in this news item

Simplified sketch from an old circus poster identified only as "Jardine Circus Organ-1950's" shows a bellows in possum belly and organist facing sideways in wagon. Apollonicon may have used this arrangement.

would appear to be factual, considering the publication and the other data given. It does change some previous concepts of the height of the wagon, based on the use of "16-foot organ pipes". This is equivalent to describing a cornet as "a tapered brass tube five feet long." Organ pipes need not be straight.

Following its boat ride to Albany, the Apollonicon was taken by road or canal to Buffalo, then by the brig St. Louis to Cleveland, and then by barge on the Miami Canal to Leesburgh, Ohio, near Cincinnati.<sup>7</sup> The wagon then joined Spalding & Rogers Circus, commencing the ordeal of hauling the large and heavy vehicle over the poor roads of the era.

It is easy to identify a new and original parade feature like the Apollonicon with Dr. Spaulding, who was by nature an innovator. At first, however, it is difficult to imagine Henry Erben as a midwife to Spaulding's concept. From about 1824, Erben had been the most eminent organ builder in America, and might have been expected to refuse an order for a circus organ. However, he also had the attributes of a prima-donna and an outright publicity hound. Completed organs were exhibited in his factory, and he had even persisted that Trinity Church authorities hold a two-day "exhibition" of the large organ he completed for them in 1846.<sup>8</sup> So perhaps the vision of his organ in an ornate wagon drawn by forty horses appealed to him. It is also quite possible that Erben and his contemporary George Jardine envisioned a market for portable organs, and were anxious to capture the market. However,

Erben's contemporaries in the field of classical music had no compliments for the Apollonicon.

It is also a bit difficult to fit John Stephenson into the circus wagon business. He was a pious man with a strong interest in sacred music. One factor may have influenced him strongly. He had been bankrupted during the panic of 1837, which had also affected the Flatfoot operations. Therefore he may have needed the circus wagon business in the 1840's, to help him back onto his financial feet. His omnibuses of this period were solidly built, and decorated lavishly with striping and painted side panels. Therefore construction and decoration of Spaulding's wagon was well within Stephenson's capabilities.<sup>9</sup>

### The Apollonicon's Appearance

There are two well-known cuts of Apollonicon. The wagon came too early in the era of photography, and is therefore depicted only in these crude woodcuts. Interpreting such illustrations is a "science" somewhat akin to deciphering ink blots. I have endeavored to make a line drawing from each cut to show the pictures in the same scale and to clarify my own interpretation of the originals. These, my own ink blots, are labeled A and B. A is taken from Spalding & Rogers letterhead, which also shows the circus fleet, with the Floating Palace, Banjo and Raymond. The Raymond was built in 1856. The wagon itself may be of earlier vintage, since it shows the original version, high enough to contain the organ. B is from a S & R herald of 1858, and shows a different configuration, having an upper deck open on the sides, to carry a band. Cut A is confusing in its detail, in showing five mirrors (?) across the top, but nine side panels, and a length which I scale less than 20 feet. Therefore I have shown ten panels, making the length 22 feet like cut B. The body height of 13 feet might seem excessive, but note the horizontal framing member above the front wheels. This I take to represent a set-back in the body, to allow the front gear to swing. No similar construction shows for the rear wheels, but it may have been necessary to provide room for springs. This type of set-back appears to have been typical on Stephenson omnibuses. Such a construction would also have permitted the rear wheels to move in to a standard spacing.

John Kunzogs<sup>10</sup> gives us the following description: "There were no ornate carvings, the flat sides of the vehicle were embellished with panel pictures of dieties of mythology. A diaper border in lavish colors separated each picture, and in this border scheme was a fretwork of holes to allow the passage of sound. When the instrument was in operation, the top or roof, in sections and hinged at the center, was raised a few inches to allow



emanation of musical tones." From the brief item in the N. Y. Tribune it now seems that the fretwork consisted of ornamental metal grillework. The term "wire-work" may be a little misleading: fences, protective screens and ornamental grilles of this period were either fabricated of wrought iron or were thin section iron castings. Dr. Spalding had seen both types in New Orleans, and may have requested this form of decoration. In sketch A I have shown how open grillework may have been utilized. This discovery about the use of ornamental ironwork probably answers my question about the distinct change in appearance between A and B.

C. G. Sturtevant,<sup>11</sup> in describing the Apollonicon, said "The great box-like wagon was not only lofty in height, but heavy . . . The very first season there was so much trouble in moving this wagon, that it had to be left behind in bad weather, and, it is understood, was shifted over onto the river boat show called the Floating Palace, owned by the firm." Conversion of the wagon to carry a band removed the need for metal grilles. The wagon became a box tableau with a full "Texas deck" above it for the band. Show advertising for the years 1853 to 1859 refer to a band as well as the 40-horse hitch, except for 1857, when performances were given only on the Floating Palace. It is not known how the tableau paintings may have changed through the years. In 1854 the description "Grand Floral Car" was used in advertising at Hartford, Conn.

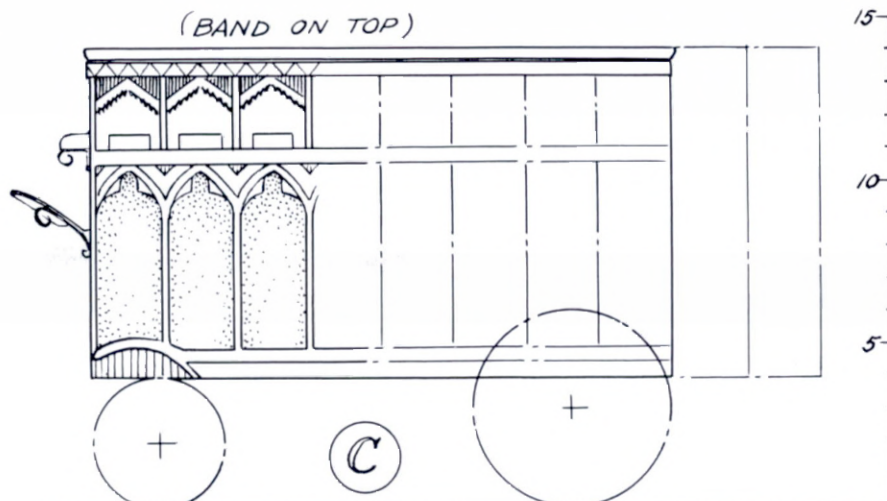


The Apollonicon made its original trip partly by canal barge.

The Apollinicon continued as a parade feature until at least 1873, the year of Spalding's partnership with Ryan and Pogue O'Brien. The organ, on the other hand, appears clearly in the beautiful Spalding & Rogers litho showing the interior of the Floating Palace. Eight banks of pipes appear in the far gallery, above the performers' entrance. The faultless perspective in this litho even permits scaling the organ facade as about 10 feet high and 27 feet long. The pipes would obviously have been rearranged from the tight layout necessary inside the wagon.

#### Just How Was the Organ Arranged?

The references which I have tapped do not answer that question. Perhaps the most meaningful way to state the problem is in terms of the more familiar steam calliope. Most steam calliopes had a vee-shaped steam chest, with the keyboard at the open end of the vee. Each whistle valve was



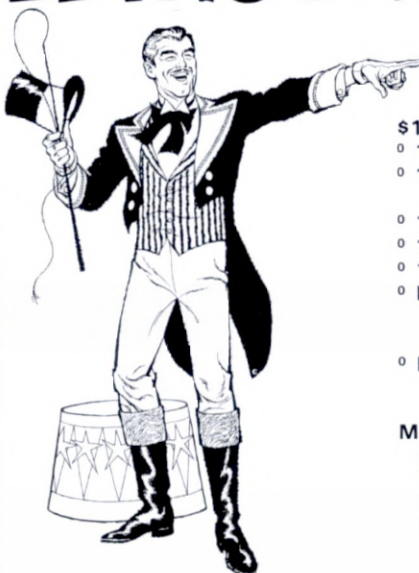
Unidentified bandwagon from herald of John O'Brien's Six Shows Consolidated, which bears resemblance to bandwagon version of Apollonicon.

actuated by a wire from the keyboard mechanism. Stoddard's patent covered a balanced poppet valve, to minimize the force necessary in each wire. Henry Erben's Apollonicon organ had eight stops, or voices. This would be equivalent to a steam calliope with eight steam headers, each having its own set of whistles. Pulling a particular "stop" would admit steam to that header. Add to this operating mechanism for percussion strings and chimes, and one can imagine the maze of wires which would be necessary. Solenoid valves and other remote actions were far in the future. No wonder

Charles Durang described this organ as "a wilderness of musical instruments"!

A new book, *The History of the Organ in the United States*, includes a reproduction of a circus poster, showing a (George) Jardine circus organ of the 1850's. The illustration shows a side elevation of the wagon, completely open on the near side. The organist sits midway along the right side of the wagon, facing in, and the pipes are arranged along the left side, apparently in a shallow vee. Thus the instrument and keyboard are 90 degrees to the usual calliope position. The bellows is shown in a "possum belly" about two feet deep, at the center of the wagon, with a lever pumped by a boy next to the keyboard. The original poster is framed, obscuring all printed

## LEWIS BROS. CIRCUS



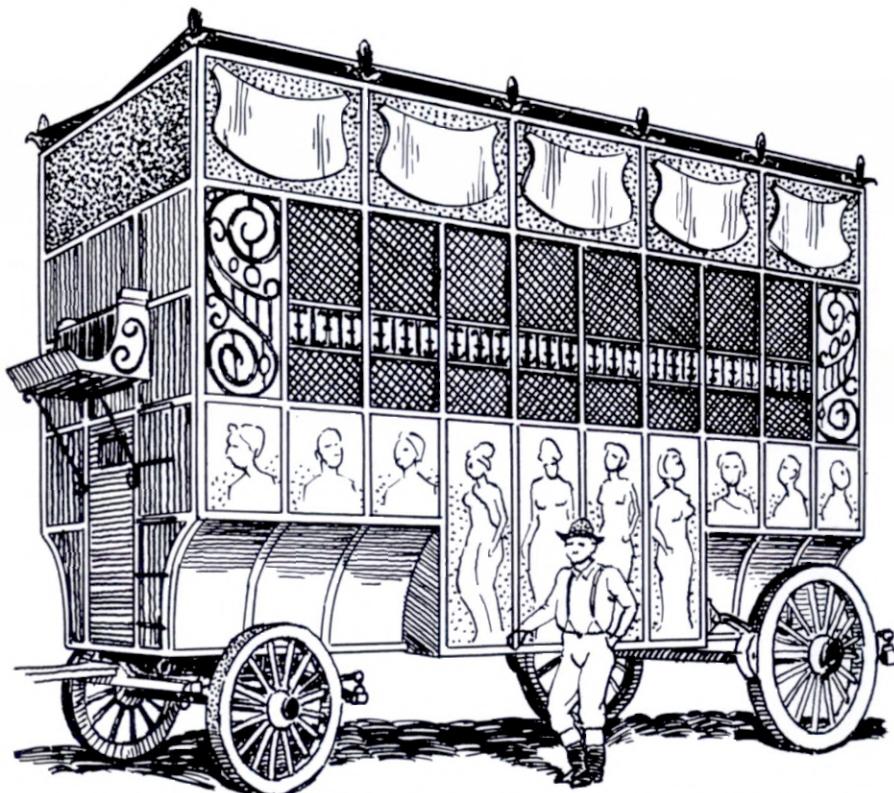
### FAN CLUB 1976

- \$10.00 brings you . . .
- 1976 Lewis Bros Patch
- 1976 Lewis Bros Season Pass (good for two persons)
- 1976 Lewis Bros Program
- 1976 Lewis Bros Colorful Litho
- 1976 Lewis Bros Route Card Service
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- Lewis Bros goodie bag with Circus goodies from past years.

Mail check or money order for \$10.00 to:  
Secretary  
Lewis Brothers Circus Fan Club  
P.O. Box 1925  
Dothan, Alabama 36301

(Please allow four weeks for shipping)





matter except "Jocelyn &" in the lower left. This could well be (Albert) Jocelyn & Purcell, New York lithographers in 1851. A herald at the Circus World Museum shows an exterior view of the "Automatodeon" organ of 1850, attributed to Henry Erben. The configuration of the two wagons is very similar.

We must keep in mind that the Apollonicon was not just a parade feature, but provided music for the performance. Thus the organist required a view of the ring. There are two other eyewitness accounts of the organ inside the circus. Spalding & Rogers played Welch's National Theatre in Philadelphia, in March 1850. Charles Durang recalled "It was a wilderness of musical instruments, varying in size from a man's body to a slender pipe-stem, susceptible of the effects of string, brass and reed bands combined. This Polyglot musical instrument, as it may be termed, accompanied the equestrian scenes, and was capable of the most startling effects, from the crash of an orchestra of 500 musicians to the soft solo of the flute: from gay dance music, comic airs and sentimental ditties to the solemn and sublime chants of the magnificent Cathedral of St. Peter's at Rome."<sup>12</sup> In a 1958 White Tops article, George Chindahl quoted a Billboard article of 1908,<sup>13</sup> in which George S. Cole recollected the Apollonicon in 1851: "... the only music was a big loud crank organ, hidden from view, enclosed in a large ornamental wagon, called the Apollonicon. That, drawn by 40 horses, four abreast, driven by J. W. Paul, the modern Jehu, constituted the parade and supplied the only music for the

This seems the most likely configuration for the Apollonicon during its initial use as an organ case on wheels. The pinched waist effect is indicated in sketch A, and is typical of Stephenson's omnibuses. This allowed standard span for the wheels, springing the rear axle, and some swinging of the front gear. The full width body was large enough to contain the organ, with bellows in the central "possum belly."

performances." There is no clue in either account as to the physical arrangement of the organ.

The scarcity of description is a frustrating aspect of this interesting wagon. Spalding & Rogers visited Worcester in 1850 and 1851. The local newspapers carried advertisements of the Apollonicon and the 40-hitch, yet not a word about the wagon appears elsewhere. In 1851 a reporter did visit the evening performance, counted the house and commented that the show had better riders than the previous year, and a particularly good clown. Somehow the long hitch and the shrieking organ passed his window unnoticed.

One other picture may be worthy of mention, based on its disturbing resemblance to cut B. This appears on a herald from the New York Historical Society, showing the parade of John O'Brien's Six Shows Consolidated. This title Chindahl shows as being active in 1877 and 1883. The bandwagon shown on the herald has been converted to Amidon ink blot C. This wagon picture shows a row of arched panels somewhat higher than those in cut B, and an upper row of smaller panels which look much like

the "Texas deck" of cut B. However, this upper deck is apparently not open, and the band is shown on top of the wagon. The body is shorter by two panels than cut B. In March 1865, the Apollonicon was offered for sale in the Clipper, according to Fred Dahlinger. Spalding then, with new partners, created the Paris Pavilion Show. In 1871 Dan Rice bought the Paris Pavilion, and Kunzog says the transaction included the Apollonicon. By 1873, Spalding, Ryan and Poge O'Brien again owned the show, so it is quite possible to find the wagon on the O'Brien show several years later, in rebuilt form. If this is true, the later illustration may offer more dependable detail.

All this leads to a favorite nightmare, that somewhere a beautiful glass plate negative of the Apollonicon lies dormant and forgotten in some attic. More realistically, perhaps this summary of known material will seed the disclosure of other data, so that the record of this big organ wagon may be more complete.

A special word of appreciation must be extended to Stuart Thayer, Gordon Carver and Frederick Dahlinger, Jr., as well as to The American Antiquarian Society and The Worcester Public Library.

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# ONE SHEET

By Stuart Thayer

Sometime in the period following the Civil War a boy with the initials, W.T.H., ran away from home to join a circus. In 1888 the memory of that escapade caused him to write it down and it was published in the *Detroit Free Press*. It was reprinted in another paper, name unknown, on July 27, 1888. The late George Chindahl came into possession of a clipping of it — which is why we don't know the name of the newspaper — and it lies today in one of those thirty boxes of his files at the Circus World Museum in Baraboo. It seems to this writer that the adventures described were pretty typical of the time and circumstances and one wonders how many hundreds of boys had the same or similar experience.

We, two Illinois farm boys, had run away from home and joined a circus. The circus hostler showed us a bunk where we could sleep and dream of the picnics we would have and how they would miss us at home.

It was not what we had been accustomed to. It was a pile of moldy hay within easy reach of a mule that hadn't yet got acquainted with us.

About 9 o'clock in the morning we were told to make a hasty toilet and repair to the dining tent. As a matter of course, I was not hungry. The sight of that table made Frank turn pale and he wanted to back out, but I chided him for his weakness and we took a seat. I ordered the waiter to bring up a cup of coffee. It wasn't served in china cups and saucers either. Everything about a circus dining tent is made to prevent breakage and of the plainest kind of tinware. The bread was stale, the meat tough and the butter —? That was our fare; but for dinner we had potatoes cooked in full dress.

After breakfast, when we were ready to start, we found, to our dismay, that our wardrobe had disappeared. What were we to do? Who could have taken it? I went to the hostler. He told me to keep still and he would find it in a day or two.

The boss told us how and what to do and soon we were ready to start with the rest. You see we traveled by land, and by night and day as well. My job was to drive the caravan containing the lion, while Frank had a cage of wax figures. When I climbed up on my vehicle and pulled up the reins I thought myself the most important personage connected with the whole concern.

More than once I caught myself building air castles. "I have taken the right step," I said to myself, "to become famous as a great circus man. I have begun on the bottom round of the ladder and am going to work my way up by degrees — that's the way to attain success. I won't have to drive very long. The boss will soon recognize my importance and promote me to a better position."

Just then I heard a cry of "all up" come down the line. Not knowing its meaning I paid no attention and kept on with my castle building. I received a shock that almost threw me from my seat. Awakening from my reverie I found I had run into the cage in front. This made the driver very indignant and he shouted back to me: "Here, what's the matter, you gawky son-of-a-gun with hayseed in your hair. If you run into me again your pumpkin-faced farmer girl won't know you." I turned around and to my dismay Frank was getting a similar lecture. I saw them all climbing down from their perches. It was a chilly night and they were making preparations to warm up a little. They took down a rail by the roadside, and for a starter poured a gallon or two of the oil in lamps, or torches, on the rails and soon had a fire. Then each man was expected to tell some story. I told mine, in my own way, but poor Frank couldn't tell anything, so they let him off, provided he would pack enough rails to keep a good fire.

Well, everything moved along admirably until the next stand or camping ground was reached. Then I had trouble. It was not long until everybody about the whole concern was calling me Jack, John, Bob and every other name they could think of. This is a custom in circus politeness, but I did not know it, and modestly informed some of the smaller ones they would have to either whip me or stop their nicknames. One fellow said he could do both, and he pulled off his coat; but before we had commenced our duel the manager told the other fellow to go about his business, while he waltzed me

off to work. I gave it my undivided attention, as I did not know but what I might own a half interest in the old trap in a week or two.

It was a warm day and I took my overcoat off to eat dinner. I thought it was warm enough to do so, and politeness rather demanded it of me. I laid it down on the seat beside me, and when I was done with my dinner I was surprised to find my overcoat gone and no one had seen it going off or knew where it was at all. I never knew, or found out, for that matter. It was then that I saw the error of carrying any clothing along with a circus.

Every circus may not be as belligerent as ours was. I soon found out what a general "roundup" was. Along in the evening of the first day the boys succeeded in raising a racket, of course all hands had to join the melee, poor Frank and I, with the rest of them. Clubs and fists were the main instruments used, and for a while clubs were trumps beyond a doubt. After the battle I looked around for poor Frank, and found him bleeding. I got a comrade and we carried him into the museum and sent for the veterinary surgeon. He recuperated faster than I expected, and by time to start that night he had entirely recovered.

The next day, now that I was a member of that world famed aggregation, I concluded to go and hear the clown's B.C. jokes, witness the riding, the vaulting, the wonderful feats of strength and skill. My associates directed me to go around and come in from the dressing room. I did, but I want to tell you I came out that way, too. I have thought since it was a putup job on me. As soon as I reached the inside I was suddenly turned around, and that's all I knew for an hour or two. When I came to my senses, or rather when my senses came to me, I saw the man who set me in locomotion. As he had a real nice apology I could do nothing but forgive him. It never occurred again.



By this time we had been out long enough for them to settle on some different and definite name for each of us. I was called the "dude" on account of my good clothes, which did not form a very striking contrast with the rest, and Frank — well, they just called him "Sleepy." Everything was moving along nicely as far as the circus was concerned, and one day I thought to vary the monotony a little by going uptown to see the country boys come in with the girls. I had not been up there long when I was startled by a hand being laid on my shoulder. Turning around a policeman said: "Young man, you are my prisoner." "What have I done?" I gasped. "Yes, what have you done? Haven't you been fighting on the streets?" "No, sir, I have not." "Oh, come along here and no foolishness. You can't monkey this chicken." And with that he walked me off, despite my protestations of innocence. As he thrust me in and I heard the click of the lock, strong as I was I was completely broken down. I was in a strange place with no friends. Oh, how I longed to see the farm and home. Even Frank did not know where I was — not any of the circus people for that matter.

Pretty soon a small boy came by to take a peep through the bars. I told him if he would go to the horse tent of the circus and tell "Sleepy" that the "Dude" wanted to see him immediately I would pass him into the circus if I could get out of there. The boy fulfilled his part and "Sleepy" soon put in his appearance, surprised to see me as the city's guest. I explained as best I could. Frank heaved a sigh and whispered through the bars that he would try to get me out if I would go back to the old farm. I hesitated a while, but finally told him to go ahead and get me out and I would go anywhere with him. He went to the manager of the circus, but the manager would have nothing to do with me and said if I was fool enough to run up town and get into a fight it was none of his business.

I was about to give up, when the policeman came in with a fellow that looked something like me, begged my pardon, said it was a case of mistaken identity and that if I would say nothing about my false imprisonment he would give me two dollars. I forgave him, though two dollars was a small compensation for the shame of such a thing.

I just quit my day dreams of ever being as famous as Barnum.



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